

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 11268 091059Z

14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 CU-04 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 EUR-25 /158 W

----- 077447

R 090845Z NOV 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8662

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 11268

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR AMBASSADOR HUMMEL

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: DOMESTIC POLITICS WEIGH ON CHOU'S MIND

SUMMARY. CHINA'S POLITICAL STRUGGLE AT HOME PROBABLY  
WEIGHS ON CHOU'S MIND. BUT NO LIKELIHOOD OF HIS EARLY DECLINE  
IN POLITICAL POWER ARISES FROM WHAT WE KNOW AT THIS TIME.  
END SUMMARY.

1. SIGNS OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE AND CONTROVERSY OVER DOMESTIC  
POLICIES, WHICH BECAME INCREASINGLY APPARENT JUST PRIOR TO THE  
PARTY CONGRESS IN AUGUST, HAVE MOUNTED IN RECENT WEEKS. EVIDENCE  
POINTING TO PREMIER CHOU AS A TARGET OF CRITICISM CONTINUES TO  
TURN UP, BUT THE VIGOR OF HIS LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE, HIGHLY  
VISIBLE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE APPEARANCES WITH FOREIGN GUESTS,  
REMAINS UNCHANGED. CHOU HAS BEEN ATTACKED BEFORE IN HIS LONG CARREER.

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PAGE 02 HONG K 11268 091059Z

NO LIKELIHOOD OF HIS EARLY DECLINE IN POLITICAL POWER ARISES

FROM WHAT WE KNOW AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, SUCH CRITICISM WOULD WEIGH ON HIS MIND.

2. IN BROAD PERSPECTIVE, THE CURRENT STRUGGLE, AS IT INVOLVES ISSUES, IS BETWEEN THOSE WHO AVOWEDLY WISH TO MAINTAIN OR PUSH FORWARD THE CHANGES IN SOCIETY BROUGHT ABOUT IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, AND THOSE ALLEGEDLY SEEKING TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK. ISSUES INCLUDE PLACING POLITICS ABOVE PRODUCTION, IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATION OVER MATERIAL INCENTIVES, AND MASS CRITICISM OVER DIRECTION BY AUTHORITIES AND EXPERTS. ALSO IN CONTEST IS CENTRAL VERSUS LOCAL AUTHORITY.

3. YOUNG PEOPLE, AT THE UNIVERSITIES AND IN THE UNPOPULAR DOWN-TO-THE-COUNTRYSIDE PROGRAM, ARE RESTIVE. THEY WON VICTORIES EARLIER THIS YEAR AGAINST THE REINTRODUCTION OF ENROLLMENT EXAMS, AND OVER THE POOR TREATMENT OF RURAL ASSIGNEES. THIS MAY HAVE GOTTEN THEIR WIND UP, AND, ALSO, PRONOUNCEMENTS AT THE PARTY CONGRESS ENCOURAGED THEM TO "GO AGAINST THE TIDE." THEIR BIERGIES ARE CURRENTLY BEING CHANNELED INTO THE CAMPAIGN TO CRITICIZE CONFUCIUS, A STRUGGLE-BY-ALLEGORY THAT HAS PEOPLE IN CHINA GUESSING ABOUT ITS TARGET. FACTIONS IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP DOUBTLESS HAVE THEIR HANDS IN THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND ARE MANIPULATING THEM.

4. MILITARY-CIVILIAN RELATIONS, AND RELATIONS BETWEEN PEKING AND THE VARIOUS PROVINCES, MAY BE CURRENTLY STRAINED BY A DIFFERENCE OF VIEW OVER MILITIA POLICY. A CALL TO ARM AND TRAIN THE MILITIA INTO AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE UNDER CIVILIAN COMMAND IS MEETING RESISTANCE FROM THOSE, PARTICULARLY AMONG PROVINCIAL-BASED MILITARY MEN, WHO ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THE POLITICAL USE TO WHICH SUCH A PARA-MILITARY FORCE MIGHT BE PUT IN THE FUTURE.

5. THE DOMESTIC STRUGGLE AND CONTROVERSY MAY BE PRESENTLY FUELED BY PREPARATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, WHICH WILL FORMALLY PASS ON POLICIES AND PEERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE CONGRESS IS EXPECTED AT ANY TIME. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DISPUTES WILL DELAY THE CONGRESS, BUT IT IS PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE THAT THIS HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.

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PAGE 03 HONG K 11268 091059Z

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED.

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**TAGS:** PINT, CH  
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